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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD

Note verbale dated 3 July 2001 from the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to enclose herewith a note by the Government of the Republic of Iraq to the High Commissioner concerning the recent air aggression perpetrated by the United States and Britain against Iraq. In the morning of 19 June 2001, the aggressors bombarded a football stadium in Talaafar in the northern part of Iraq, which led to the death of 23 young people and tens of injuries.

In its note, the Government of the Republic of Iraq wishes that the High Commissioner for Human Rights condemn this reprehensive crime and calls upon the United States and Britain to put an end to their serial aggressions against the Iraqi people in the north and south of Iraq with the excuse that they are protecting the no-fly zones. These no-fly zones are illegal and illigitimate. Those responsible for the crime of Talafaar should be convicted in international courts and handed down the right punishment for committing war crimes against innocent children.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Iraq would appreciate it if the aforementioned note* could be issued as a document of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

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* Reproduced as received, in Arabic and English only.

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Annex

Note from the Government of the Republic of Iraq addressed to Mrs. Mary Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights

On 19 June 2001, United States and British aircraft launched a criminal attack on a football stadium in the Talaafar area of northern Iraq as a result of which 23 children and young men at that stadium were killed and dozens wounded.

For more than 10 years, the children of Iraq have been subjected to deliberate programmed murder and intimidation, initially through the devastating war orchestrated by the United States of America and the United Kingdom which targeted their lives and their future and exposed them to conditions of violence, deprivation and loss of life, and subsequently through the comprehensive embargo, which deprived them of their right to life, health, education and a secure childhood, and the ongoing aerial bombardments of civilian institutions in which civilians are killed at random. All this reconfirms the heinous nature of the crimes which those two States have persistently committed in flagrant violation of the principles of international law and the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and the obligations embodied in the Optional Protocols of 1977, the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 25 May 2000. Moreover, the acts of aggression which those two States are committing against the children of Iraq run counter to the endeavours that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the General Assembly and the Security Council are making to protect children and ensure a better world for them through the holding of the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children in September 2001. These acts of aggression also run counter to the reports of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the Security Council on the effect of armed conflicts on children, in which he has emphasized the need to accord the highest priority to child victims of wars.

The ongoing United States-British military aggression against the people of Iraq, and particularly its children, illustrates the moral vacuity of those two States and their contempt for the fundamental rules of international humanitarian law. Accordingly, immediate action is required to put an end to those crimes that are being committed before the eyes of the international community, which is standing helpless in the face of this tragedy, being hesitant to adopt a fair and equitable position for fear of angering two dominant States which are imposing their policy on the other States of the world in total disregard of international law and the principles of human rights.

In the light of this massacre of innocent children by the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the Government of the Republic of Iraq trusts that the High Commissioner for Human Rights will condemn that odious crime and call upon the United States Administration and the British Government to refrain from the commission of further crimes against the Iraqi people in the northern and southern regions of Iraq on the pretext of protecting the illegitimate and illegal air exclusion zones and to refer the persons responsible for that odious crime to international tribunals so that just retribution can be imposed on them for that war crime involving the deliberate murder of innocent children.